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## **SBA 2005 WOMEN IN BUSINESS CHAMPION GOES TO CAMPBELL CONSULTING GROUP**

**ST. LOUIS** -- Ginni Campbell, president, Campbell Consulting Group, has been working with small business owners for nearly 20 years. She was director of the Small Business Development Center at Saint Louis University for 14 years and has owned Campbell Consulting Group for five years. Over that time, she has been particularly sensitive to the needs of women business owners who face obstacles and challenges that their male counterparts never encounter.

One of the major challenges for women is financing. In 1990, Ginni started what became an annual "Small Business Finance Fair," a day-long event with workshops focused on financing issues and exhibits featuring various financing sources. The Finance Fair continued each year until the SBDC at Saint Louis University ended its operations in 1999.

In 1994, Ginni and Larry Parker, a retired advertising entrepreneur, drafted a concept for a business development center for the Grace Hill Settlement House located in an impoverished neighborhood on the near north side of the city. The neighborhood was highly populated with welfare and very low-income women. Ginni and Larry believed that with training and counseling there were women who could successfully operate small businesses in their homes and in the neighborhood. Larry recruited an advisory board, which raised some money, and Ginni established the consulting and training operations for the center.

In 1998, Ginni worked with the Grace Hill Business Center to develop the proposal for a women's business center. It was based on the highly successful Business Center model with special outreach to women. Grace Hill received the award and it rapidly became one of the "poster centers" in the country. The Grace Hill Women's Business Center has an 80 percent success rate among its client business owners. Graduates of the Business Plan class continue to exclaim, "This is the most important thing I have ever done. It has changed the course of my life and I can now be self-sufficient." These are powerful words from women who formerly had little hope in their lives.

Ginni is the current president of NAWBO St. Louis. Her motto for the year is "It is time to soar. Take your business to the next level!" All of the programs are focused on providing women business owners with valuable information that they can use to successfully grow their business.

Ginni has been involved in public policy activities. She was part of a delegation that went to Jefferson City in January 2004 to challenge the state's failure to comply with Executive Order requiring 5 percent of state procurement be with WBEs.

And all of this is why Ginni Campbell is the SBA 2005 Women in Business Champion of the Year.

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